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Acute Psychiatric Group Therapy for Hospitalized Individuals with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness

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Introduction
Mental illness is a medical condition that one in 17 Americans suffer. It impairs their moods, feelings, interpersonal relationships, and daily functioning. With between 70 and 90 percent of individuals having improved well-being. Without it, many will become homeless, inappropriately incarcerated, or take their own lives (NAMI, 2009).

Statement of Purpose
The purpose of this study was to identify group therapy interventions to be provided during a time limited acute psychiatric hospitalization for individuals with serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI) derived from evidenced-based research.

Research Question
What skills deficits and theory of practice are most efficacious with individuals with SPMI diagnosis served by ISJ Behavioral Health Unit?

Immanuel St Joseph's Behavioral Health Unit
Immanuel St Joseph's (ISJ) Hospital is an owned affiliate of Mayo Clinic in Rochester and serves as a regional hub for southern Minnesota. The behavioral health unit at ISJ provides mental health services to adults in a crisis setting.

Evidenced-Based Practice and the Need for it on the Behavioral Health Unit
Evidenced-based practice is a process that integrates current research along with clinical expertise and patient preferences into the development of practice guidelines. As a result it is imperative that groups emanate from evidenced-based research and are based on best practice guidelines.

Literature Review
Many studies have addressed the components of intervention that are most important for individuals with bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, major depressive disorder and schizophrenia. The literature shows that with successful intervention at a group therapeutic level, individuals will have increased success as represented in Figure 4.

Bipolar Disorder- Bipolar Disorder is a mood disorder in which approximately two million American adults live with and is characterized when the individual experiences one or more manic episodes that alternate with major depression, similar to a rollercoaster effect (APA, 2000).

Borderline Personality Disorder- According to the DSM-IV-TR (2000), borderline personality disorder is a pattern of therapy interventions that are significantly altered with SPMI utilizing cognitive behavioral therapy with a focus on social and relationship skills such as expression of feeling, and coping skills that assist in the daily functioning with their mental illness.

Methodology
A systematic review of literature was conducted supporting evidenced-based practices on group therapy. The data was collected from journal sources that produced research on studies of therapeutic treatment of individuals with bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, major depressive disorder, and schizophrenia. Based on the literature review, the information was then organized into three areas of measure including skills to be addressed in group settings, effective therapy techniques, and outcomes of successful group therapy interventions.

Based on the literature review, the skill deficit areas that were noted as predominant in the diagnoses, were formulated into a table of skills recommended to address during group as seen in Figure 2. The therapy techniques that the literature review suggested were efficacious are listed, based on diagnoses in Figure 3. The outcomes of successful group therapy are then listed in Figure 4 and are addressed in the findings section.

Findings
Results of the literature review indicated that the skills that should be addressed through group therapy in an acute setting include social, relationship and coping skills. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has been shown to be the most effective treatment. The integration of therapy utilized with patients diagnosed with SPMI in an acute treatment setting. In reference to outcomes of successful group therapy, the four diagnostic categories had many similar positive outcomes including decreased hospitalizations, increased treatment gains, and improved quality of life.

Implications and Recommendations for Use at Immanuel St Joseph's Hospital
Based on findings of this project, it is recommended that Immanuel St. Joseph’s Behavioral Health Unit staff implement and utilize interventions diagnosed with SPMI utilizing cognitive behavioral therapy with a focus on social and relationship skills such as expression of feeling, and coping skills that assist in the daily functioning with their mental illness.